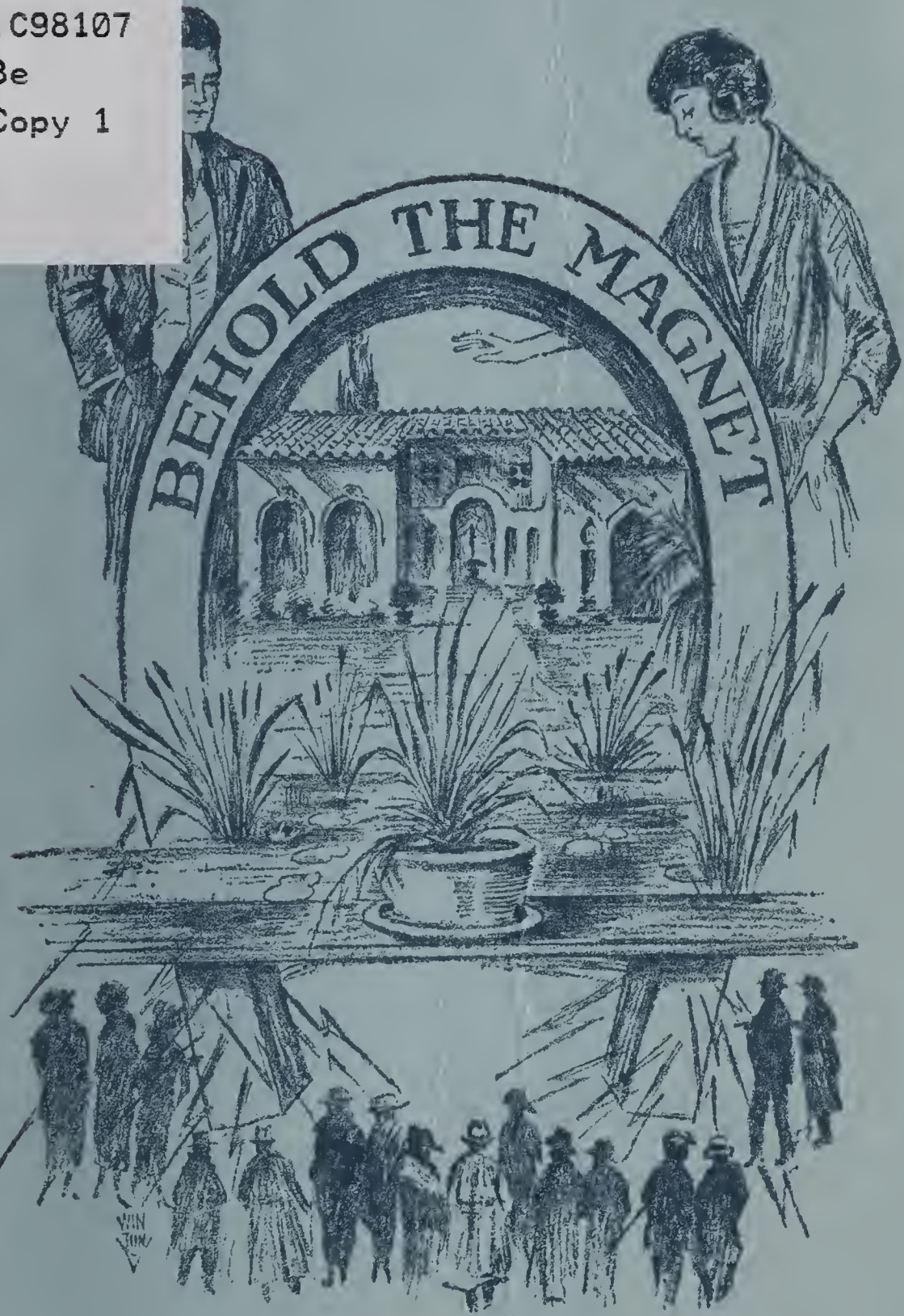


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BEHOLD
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MAGNET



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BY
ELIZABETH CUTTING

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GILLETT SERVICE LEAGUE
Hollywood, California



“I hold it as a changeless law from which no soul can sway or swerve—we have that in us which will draw that which we need or most deserve.”

WALT WHITMAN.

Cast of Characters

Samuel Service—whose merry, child-like, lovable nature had never been quenched by the disillusionments of his earlier life; strikingly dark and handsome, with the simplicity of dress and bearing which is the natural result of accustomed wealth.

Joy Goodwin — refined, thoughtful, yet sprightly by nature; attractive and graceful in appearance, with an originality of style not usually seen in humble surroundings like hers.

Billy Goodwin—Joy's seven-year-old son, imaginative to an unusual degree, who preferred to play in his own little world of fun and fancy with his dog, "Pal," rather than mingle with the kind of boys to be found in their neighborhood.

Diana—wholesome, witty, lovable negro woman who had cared for Billy from infancy, and was devoted to her mistress and the boy with the ardor of the old-time "mammy."

Jerome Cabot—Mrs. Goodwin's employer; austere, hard-headed business man, extremely jealous of his own interests, self-willed, with a determination which swept everything and everybody from his path that might interfere with his plans.

Miles Ferret—Cabot's accomplice—a passive tool in dangerous hands.

George—Negro porter at the Equity Building where Cabot's offices were located; loyal to Mrs. Goodwin's interests, and an insistent wooer of Diana's.

Lem—Rival suitor for Diana's hand.

Group of 100 orphan children with several teachers in charge; negro chauffeurs for Service and Cabot; Cabot's "rough-neck" ranch hand and his hard-faced wife.

Scenes laid in Southern California :

1. Mrs. Goodwin's bungalow.
2. Jerome Cabot's office.
3. The "Service Center."
4. Ranch house in remote canyon of the foot-hills.



BEHOLD THE MAGNET!

“And now abideth Faith, Hope, Love—these three—and the greatest of these is Love.”

The early winter evening closed in upon Joy Goodwin and her seven-year-old son, Billy, sitting before a small grate fire in a simple California bungalow living-room. The boy, evidently ready for bed in his little pajamas, was bending with absorbed attention over his mother's knees, on which reposed a copy of “Arabian Nights,” open at the always enchanting tale of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp.

Evidently reading his mother's wistful thought as she looked at the cheap, unadorned little volume, the boy looked up at her happily, exclaiming, “But, mother, I don't need any pictures; I just see it plain as day. And what do you suppose? This afternoon ‘Pal’ and I were playing ‘Aladdin’ out on the curb, and I was making him sit up on his hind legs, with the bicycle lamp tucked in his front paw. I was just playing be the genie to obey his commands when along came a man—very dark like an Arab—and he laughed a lot and played with us for a long time. ‘Pal’ just loved him and so did I. He could ‘magine things, too, without any pictures, and he's coming back to play some more.”

Reluctantly closing the book, the little chap trudged off to bed in the simple room beyond,

which sufficed for both mother and son in this very tiny home, bespeaking its mistress' dainty personality, to a marked degree, in spite of its evident limitations. Tucking Billy in, after a vigorous hug, Joy returned to her comfortable reading chair in the living room and picked up a book on a nearby table. Evidently a sentence caught her attention quickly, for she half closed the book, looked thoughtfully into the dying embers of the fire, and sat meditatively for a few moments.

“Nor time nor space, nor deep nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.”

These lines from the well-loved Burroughs' poem seemed to stand out on the page in blackest letters as she had opened the book.

“That is the law of attraction—the sure solution of every problem. I shall prove it, too, old dear,” she added aloud, turning to stroke the responsive dog, Billy's playmate, who reached up, looking steadfastly in her face, as if comprehending her inmost thoughts as well as the spoken word.

At this moment a rear door opened, showing the somewhat tousled head of black Diana. This devoted “mammy” had returned to care for “her baby” and the boy since first the young mother had been thrust into a business career, against all of her natural inclinations, through the untimely death of a fond but improvident husband.

“I’se gwine out a bit if you all won’t be lonesome, Mis’ Joy,” and with a friendly but absent-minded nod from Mrs. Goodwin, she retreated.

A little later, Diana, trudging down a busy thoroughfare, suddenly encountered an admirer—George, the colored porter at the Equity Building where Mrs. Goodwin spent her working hours in the employ of Jerome Cabot, member of a firm of wealthy brokers. With the usual interest in his office patrons, George had kept an eye on Mrs. Goodwin, whose considerate treatment of him had won his devotion, as well, knowing her story through Diana. Of late he had observed that Mr. Cabot showed more than customary business interest in dealing with his attractive but dignified office manager. This fact, together with Mrs. Goodwin’s evident dislike for such increasing attentions, had aroused the good man’s suspicions that all was not as it should be for her peace of mind.

“Come ’long, George, you’se late for de meetin’ now,” called Diana, but George pulled away impatiently, “I’se gwine back to de buildin’. Sumpin’s doin’ an’ I don’ lak it. Where’s yo’ missus?” But Diana had moved on, losing interest when she found George was not bound for the meeting house, and not grasping the drift of his remarks. George proceeded muttering to himself, “Spose dat

Lem 'll be hanging 'roun' her, but dis time I's gwine to look out fo' de Missus fust."

A few minutes afterward as George reached the building, he saw Mr. Cabot hurriedly entering his car in company with a man of still more sinister aspect, the latter turning in time to see the porter, and evidently remarking on the incident to his companion as they drove away.

During the hour which followed Diana's departure, Joy had sat reading and thinking, rising once or twice to put a fresh log on the grate fire which was evidently welcome on this chilly California evening. Suddenly "Pal" growled, rose up from his post at the corner of the chimney and began to bark. At a word from his mistress he stopped the loud barking but continued to growl as steps were now evident to her less sensitive ears.

The bell rang and Joy hastily put her open book on the table under the reading lamp. Grasping the dog by the collar, she approached the door and turned on the porch light. She drew open the door slightly, then gave an involuntary start on seeing her austere employer with a cynical smile and a half-triumphant glance as he advanced without waiting for an invitation. Hesitatingly Joy stepped back to admit Mr. Cabot, sharply reprimanding the dog who continued to growl and sniff suspiciously at the stranger's heels.

“Is there anything the matter, Mr. Cabot? Why did you not telephone if you wished to give me any directions regarding tomorrow? Are you leaving town?” These questions rapidly one after another gave Joy a chance to recover her poise somewhat as she motioned to the dog to go back to his seat in the corner. Her employer looked admiringly up and down the pretty curves of Joy’s well-rounded figure, set off becomingly by a simple negligee of becoming color. Instinctively she shrank away from him, sensing again the accurate instincts of the dog in reading character—a fact on which she had learned to depend. For weeks she had been feeling a growing dislike towards Cabot, but in the business atmosphere of daily contact she had been able to hold her own, realizing only too well the urgent demands which kept her tied to an uncongenial task.

“Mrs. Goodwin, for five months I’ve been watching and waiting for you—for just this opportunity. My interest is not easily aroused but I have determined to win you for my personal pleasure, and you know full well that what I will to do, I always accomplish.” Joy sank into the near-by chair, for a moment feeling helpless at his words and manner. Then, as her eyes fell on the book she had been reading, there suddenly came to her an assurance of strength to meet any emergency. With this thought she drew herself erect and was about to reply when the attention of both

was directed to the adjoining room by the sudden appearance of a little white figure in pajamas, rubbing his eyes sleepily as he said, "What's the matter, Mother? I was just dreaming that the African magician was carrying off Aladdin's lovely princess and then I heard Pal's barking. Who are you?" turning to Cabot inquiringly.

"This is Mr. Cabot at the office where Mother works, Billy."

"But he looks a lot like that African magician I saw in my dream. You aren't going to take my princess-mother, are you? If you do, Pal and I'll—." Just then the dog rose growling ominously and started toward a side window. Billy called out excitedly, "A man—looking in—I saw him."

Cabot's quick glance had also detected the intruder's features and under guise of investigating to quiet the disturbance, he beat a hasty retreat to his auto. As the door had opened when Cabot left, Joy caught a glimpse of another figure hurriedly getting into the rear seat; the door of the machine banged a little, and instantly the car got under full power in its dash down the street toward town.

At the next block Cabot turned half-around at the wheel, speaking to his companion in the rear seat, "Well, did you get a good look at the youngster? You'd easily remember his unusual eyes. The dog is the big hindrance—they're always playing together," and he in-

wardly recoiled a bit, remembering the reception he had just received, both from the animal and his mistress.

In the meantime Mrs. Goodwin had double-locked the door, pending Diana's return, then sank into the big chair before the fire, cuddling the boy for a time until he grew sleepy, and carried him off to bed. As she returned to the living-room table, her glance fell upon the book in which she had been so much absorbed when the disturbing interruption came. Reminded of her former peaceful thoughts, with a look of determination, she said half-aloud to the dog, "Pal, I know I have a protector somewhere, besides you, and I shall find him soon." She leaned back with a perfect sense of relaxation, falling into a little doze until the return of her faithful guardian, Diana.

* * * * *

This same evening, in quite a distant and different part of the city, a man was pacing up and down his luxurious living-room. Here, too, a log fire crackled, but of more generous proportions, and in a wide, open fireplace which bespoke every comfort that money could buy. Near by lay a magnificent St. Bernard dog majestically stretched on a beautiful rug, keeping a watchful eye on his master as if in wonderment at the latter's unusual restlessness. The man finally walked over to a beautiful grand player-piano—his usual means

of distracting attention from disturbing memories.

Handsome, strikingly dark, with eyes that lit into a veritable starry gleam when at play with his dog or a child, Samuel Service was a figure that attracted attention everywhere, yet with a genuine simplicity of manner which showed an almost child-like unconsciousness of his appearance and the magnetic effect of his lovable personality. His love for children had developed into almost a passion, pathetic in its fatherly devotion since his only boy had died at birth. A gradual estrangement had grown up between his wife and himself, due largely to an entire lack of comprehension on her part of his ambitions, as her self-centered mind could not grasp the plan for universal service which was his life-motive. Following the inevitable divorce, he had for several years devoted himself exclusively to the practical working out of his ideas and apparently had succeeded in forgetting the personal side of life, as he had hoped to realize it.

As Service sat listening to the beautifully modulated strains of the piano, interpreted by a master-mind through the wonderful mechanism at his command, he found his mental gaze turning persistently to the scenes of the afternoon.

A business errand had brought him to another part of the city, and choosing to take his daily walk in this way, he had gone some

blocks out of the necessary route before returning to the place where he had parked his car. Turning a corner, through a strange impulse which he could not resist, he saw to his keen delight a little scene being enacted on the curb in front of a tiny bungalow. Sitting upright on his hind legs, an intelligent-looking dog of probably mixed ancestry was proudly holding a funny old bicycle lamp between his front paw and his body. In the gutter, directly facing the dog, stood a manly little fellow about seven years old, his attractive face set off rather strikingly by a mass of brown hair.

At a command from his little master, "Rub the lamp," the dog waved his unoccupied paw up and down, brushing the edge of the old lamp which he was embracing in the bend of the other paw.

Hearing a step the boy looked up expectantly, apparently not the least surprised when Service stopped short, his radiant smile aglow at the prospect of both child and dog. "Here's the genie, Pal. Isn't he black?"—then to Service, "You must say, 'I am the slave of the lamp at your command. What is your bidding, Aladdin?'"

Instantly grasping the spirit of reality in the little scene before him, Service threw himself with child-like delight into the play for fully a half hour, only to be brought back to the

every-day, grown-up world by hearing a friendly negro voice calling out: "Come along, chile, and git cleaned up 'fo' you mammy come home from de office." An instant's cloud came over the little boy's face at the prospect of having to leave his enchanting world and the new-found playmate who knew just how to do things. However, he did not hesitate to obey the summons, and calling the dog, started toward the house. With a wave of the hand to Service, he called out cheerily, "I'll be here tomorrow and perhaps we'll get the palace built." "Aye, aye, sir," called back Service, as he turned to retrace his steps, carefully taking note of the name of the street before he turned the corner.

* * * * *

The ceasing of the piano record brought Service back with a start to his own luxurious room and its emptiness so far as human companionship was concerned, just as Leo, the great St. Bernard, rising up from the hearth, came over inquiringly to put his head on his master's knee and look searchingly into his face.

"Well, old boy, we'll have to fill up this big house someway or else build another. What do you say to adopting a family?"

He walked over to a bookcase, searched for a few minutes, laughing as he brought out a large volume. Settling himself comfortably

in the depths of an armchair under the reading lamp, he turned the pages until he found the story of "Aladdin." For some time he sat completely absorbed in its beautiful illustrations and refreshing his memory on this immortal tale so appealing to the imagination. Then putting the book down, he turned to the dog at his side, patting him enthusiastically as he exclaimed half aloud, "There is more truth than fiction woven into that fascinating tale, only we've failed to touch the real magnet which brings us our desires." With a new light of expectation in his face, he arose, gave a final pat to his faithful friend and turned toward his own suite leading out from the farther end of the room.

* * * * *

The following afternoon found Service retracing his steps to the scene of his frolic with the boy, partly urged on by his own desire, but also because of his innate faithfulness of spirit to child as well as dog, in not betraying the confidence so serenely placed in him by his little playmate. Gaily they romped up and down the block, Billy's dog always at their heels, then settled down on the curb to resume the "Aladdin" game.

"I have a scheme, Billy, if your mother will give her consent. Let's have Diana bring you over to my house where there is lots of room, and we'll have a real palace appear when you rub the lamp. Ask your mother when she re-

turns if I may call and make arrangements for our little play at my home. Give this card to her and I will telephone early in the evening." Delighted at the prospect of further adventure with his new friend, Billy took the card and started toward the house where Diana was just appearing at the front door to call her charge. Waving goodbye, Service walked around the corner where he had this time parked his car, and sped homeward as full of happy anticipation as the little lad he had left.

A little later, as he drove into the park completely surrounding his beautiful home, built in an unusual style according to his own plans, the big dog came bounding forward to meet him and together they went into a side door to the left of the patio where Service busied himself for some time in his private auditorium—a new interest in his whole manner, whistling and laughing aloud from time to time as he tried out the new projection lamp on his own "silver screen."

A few hours afterward saw him at the telephone awaiting with boyish eagerness the permission which was evidently granted, as he hastily put on his coat, jumped into the car, and within an hour was ringing the bell at the modest home of Joy Goodwin.

In honor of the unusual event, black Diana, resplendent in white apron, opened the door

for the caller, but there was little room for formality when Billy rushed at his new friend exclaiming, "See, Mother, this is my Arabian knight—he's dark but he isn't wicked." Mrs. Goodwin came forward as the dog ran joyfully up to Service, while Billy's spontaneous introduction quite naturally dispelled any sense of strangeness. Instantly there came over her a feeling of complete harmony and ease as if lifted into her own native atmosphere. With the boy on his knee, as they sat before the fire, Service, too, became conscious of an inner contentment and radiance of being in this little impromptu family circle which he had so unexpectedly completed by his presence.

As they talked, the boy slipped down and running over to his own little desk, came back to show Service one of his chief treasures—a little horseshoe magnet. Lifting it up above a tray, groups of iron filings clung to each end of the horseshoe, and Mrs. Goodwin laughingly explained, "The magnet is the symbol of our philosophy in this household, and even Diana (smiling as the radiant black face appeared in the doorway on the lookout for the needs of the grate fire) unconsciously draws us both into a charmed circle with her kindly ministrations."

Time sped all too quickly for each one of the little group, but Service realized that the boy's bedtime had probably long since arrived and

rose to take his departure. "I'll send the car, then, at two o'clock for the boy and his faithful guardian and have him home when you arrive."

At the door, as he shook hands with Joy, Billy held tightly to his other hand, while the dog at his heels frisked joyously. "Why, Mother, my 'Arab' is a magnet, don't you see? We're all clinging to him just like the iron filings." With a happy laugh they both released his hands and the door closed on a man with a new vision in his mind and a faster heart-beat as he entered his car and sped toward home.

When he sat down an hour later in a comfortable smoking jacket for a good time with his pipe before the fire, his great house seemed at last to be peopled aright. Visions of a woman and a boy filled its spaces, though even this personal joy would not be allowed to crowd out the many plans he had already put into operation for letting his beautiful home "Center" be of service to the public at certain times and for various groups of those less fortunate. "Well, old boy, I haven't forgotten you, either," as the great dog stole up and rested his head on his master's knee, looking eagerly for the usual caresses.

* * * * *

The next morning at the office found Joy Goodwin facing a tense situation, following close on the heels of the freedom and happi-

ness experienced the previous night in her meeting with Samuel Service. She sat alone at the desk, her mind persistently returning to the events of the evening before, when the door opened noiselessly and Mr. Cabot, whom she had thought out of town for the day, suddenly confronted her with his usual attitude of self-willed assurance. "I have ordered my car for two o'clock to take you and the boy with me out to a country place I am looking over with a view to your interests—and mine," he added, after a pause in which he fixed his eyes on her with a hypnotic intensity and a pride of supposed possession.

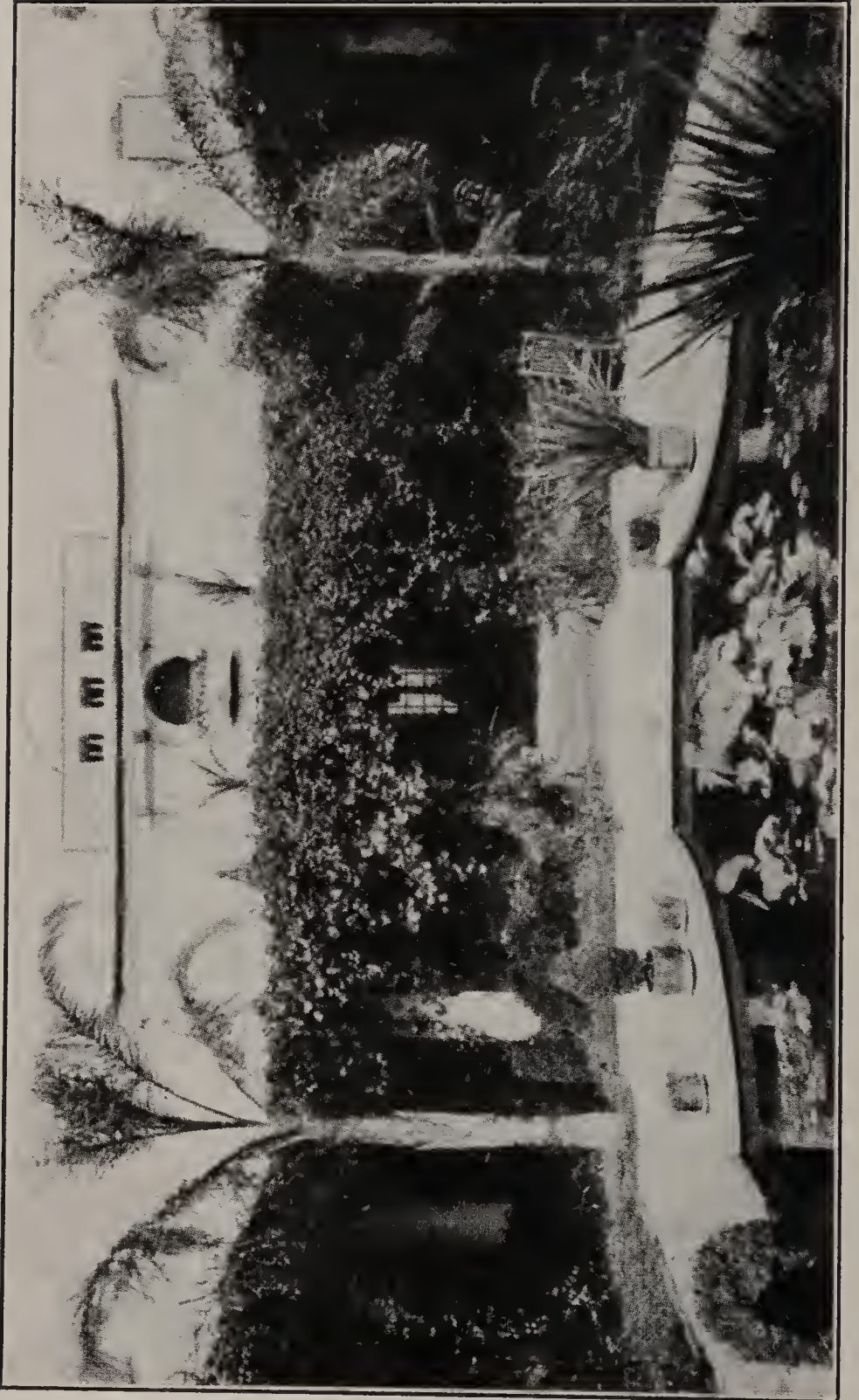
Joy rose in her chair, for a moment taken by surprise. "It is impossible, Mr. Cabot. My boy is leaving at that time with Diana, my servant, for an afternoon with a—friend, and I do not care to go alone with you on such a trip—I am needed here, as you well know."

Cabot turned to his inner office with a half-sneering smile, followed by a suppressed expression of jealousy as he remarked, "Oh—another friend is interested in the boy, I see. Well, there are other ways of securing your society—later on." Once beyond his closed door, Cabot hurriedly went to the telephone. Evidently getting the person he wanted, he said quietly, "Have the car near the bungalow at two o'clock. Follow to learn destination. Tonight at the club for dinner at six."

Shortly before two o'clock that afternoon a limousine parked half-way down the block from the Goodwin bungalow. Its sole occupant, presumably waiting for someone, kept his glance down the street where a neatly dressed little boy was romping with his dog. Presently a big car drew up before the bungalow, the boy ran to the house, calling Diana and reluctantly sending the dog inside as he said consolingly, "You aren't invited this time, dear old 'Pal.' You must guard the house." Smiling Diana appeared, decked in her best, and together they entered the comfortable car, while the colored chauffeur lifted his hat with dignity, yet with a show of interest in his charges, both black and white.

As they moved noiselessly around the corner, the limousine down the block slowly got under way and took the same route, keeping within easy distance behind on the city streets, and dropping back a little further as they entered the long stretches of road leading to the suburban section. On they went out beautiful driveways until at last the first car turned into what seemed like a park with no residence visible from the road. It disappeared up a winding drive, lined on both sides by graceful pepper trees, while the second car halted long enough for the man inside to note the unusual name over the gateway:

SERVICE CENTER—Open to the public
Wednesdays and Saturdays, 2-5 P. M.



Then he turned and drove swiftly back to the city.

When Diana and Billy alighted from the car in front of the "Center," Service was leisurely coming toward the steps through the beautiful open patio, followed by his dignified, yet alert comrade, "Leo," all eagerness to greet the arrivals. Billy ran forward in delight to grasp his friend's hands, exclaiming, "Is this the palace? Isn't it wonderful?"

Service greeted Diana courteously and then introduced his dog companion with due respect to the latter's keen intelligence and sympathetic understanding of humans. The latter instantly recognized the nature of the two friendly guests and led them joyously toward the porch beyond the patio. On the way Billy stopped at the fountain in the center to watch the goldfish in the miniature pond below, then looked up radiantly toward the right wing of the building as a burst of bird song filled the air. This ecstasy of sound, the lovely scent of flowers, vines and ferns, with the brilliant California sunshine casting a spell over the whole scene, conveyed to the little boy's mind a sudden realization of the enchanted palace of his play-world, and he fairly danced with delight.

Service wisely did nothing to quell his enthusiasm and when it had spent itself to a degree, he led the way into the big comfortable living-room with its enchanting pictures, books, player-piano, etc. For a time they listened to

the music, dog and boy already fast friends as they stretched out on a fur rug together.

Then, one by one, Service showed the wings of the building to his small guest, followed respectfully by the amazed Diana to whom such a place as a home was apparently a mystifying revelation. Although enjoying the luxury of his "Center" home, Service avoided all formality and ostentation in his daily life, keeping as few servants as possible for the needs of the place. In carrying out his ideas for sharing with the rest of the world his interesting home and business center, he had evolved many interesting features for independent living, combined with useful activities and methods of entertainment and relaxation.

To the right of the patio was a perfect little workshop and exhibition room where Service carried on his own particular indoor hobby of making jewelry. With his long, deft fingers he pointed out to his guests the delicate tools, the unset stones and precious metals he used in the work; then several cabinets filled with finished work of rare beauty. Occupying the whole end of the room was a wire birdhouse, opening out on the patio, with a large collection of beautiful canaries—his constant source of joy while busy in the workshop at the other end of the room.

Passing out on the porch again, they ascended a graceful stairway leading out of the

patio to a roof garden overlooking the hills, with a vista of distant city and beyond, the shimmering ocean. Here under an awning they found a dainty table, evidently in readiness for a "tea-party" and presently a maid appeared with cakes and ice cream in forms to delight the fancy of a child. This, to Billy, was the climax, so he supposed, to his "Arabian Nights' Entertainment," but another surprise awaited him on descending similar stairs on the other side of the patio into the left wing of the building.

As they entered the doorway, Service turned on the electric lights and there, in miniature, was a complete theatre. The boy gazed in wonder at the little stage with its perfect appointments of scenery, when suddenly the lights went out, a "silver screen" descended, and a moving-picture light focussed on a scene of surpassing beauty—a beautiful "real" palace, followed by a short version of the "Cinderella" story which Service had secured in preparation for a private entertainment he was planning for a group of orphans from a Home in the city.

After the last scene dissolved and the lights went on again, Billy, now quiet and tired by his wonderful two hours in this new world of beauty and surprises, made ready to leave, at Diana's reminder. The car was waiting for them, and as they drove off, Billy looked back to see the last wave from Service and the last

wag of the tail from "Leo." Turning to his nurse with tired, wondering eyes, as if still in a dream, the boy said slowly, "My Arab has a magnet better than Aladdin's lamp and I believe it is inside of him."

* * * * *

That evening Jerome Cabot dined at the club, as arranged in the morning over the telephone. His companion, Miles Ferret, was very evidently his passive tool, judging by the conversation in low tones as soon as the waiter was out of hearing. Cabot leaned forward eagerly while Ferret described his ride of the afternoon into the suburbs. "The destination was a very unusual place, owned, I have since learned, by a wealthy man, Samuel Service, a man of hobbies—children, animals, and building these 'Centers,' as he calls them. A notice on the gateway said the place was open to the public two afternoons a week; it might be well to send someone out to scout around. He evidently has unlimited means, so you are bidding against strong odds, Cabot, if you expect to divert my lady's attention from all that."

"But I have determined on this step," replied the evident dictator in a masterful, crushing tone, "and I have never yet lost out." With this, Ferret subsided, and when they rose, walking toward the lobby, Cabot added, "I shall expect your execution of the plan in every detail as I outlined it to you last night

on leaving the Equity Building, and remember to pay that darky well."

"By-the-way," Ferret began meekly, "Did you notice that porter of yours at the building watching us closely as we drove off? He has seemed devotedly interested in your office manager; several times when I have been waiting outside for you, he has trumped up excuses to come in and look after the trash basket, eyeing me each time as if he thought I might be going to kidnap her. You'll have to get him and that black nurse of hers otherwise engaged or there may be serious interference. Those negro servants are surely devoted when they are faithful and will fight to the death to defend their employers—a relic of slave days, I judge."

"I'll see to that," said Cabot abruptly and hurried away to his waiting car.

* * * * *

As the days sped by, Billy's visit to the "Service Center" was often repeated, always under the protecting care of loyal Diana, while an occasional call from Service on Mrs. Goodwin served to strengthen the bond which had brought her boy into such a joyous companionship.

One afternoon, when Service's car was expected to take the boy and nurse out to the "Center," Billy had gone out earlier than usual to watch for its arrival. As a machine drew up to the curb, he ran forward eagerly and

was just stepping into the door which had opened instantly, when he noticed the chauffeur's voice—unaccustomed to him. "Mista Suvicé wants you early today, so jump in quickly, boy," and he pulled him inside, slamming the door. "But who are you—and, wait, please, chauffeur, Diana isn't ready. She'll be —," but at this instant a man emerged from the rear seat of the big limousine, covered the boy's head, holding him fast, as he tried to protest in a muffled voice.

In the meantime, Billy's faithful "Pal," who had been looking out of the window mournfully, knowing that he would be left behind, noticed the unusual disappearance of his little master without Diana and began to bark loudly. Diana, just pulling on her dress, and struggling to hold it together as she ran, came rushing into the front room. She looked out of the window past the dog, and saw that the boy wasn't in sight. Noticing the dog's disturbed manner, she ran to the door, looked up and down the block. Hurrying to the rear of the house, she grabbed her coat and with the dog, started out around the corner. Knowing the boy's usual obedience, his sudden dropping out of sight caused Diana genuine alarm, and at the end of half an hour, she was well nigh distracted.

Returning to the house she called Service and asked if the car had called, learning that it had been gone for some time. Meanwhile,

Service's chauffeur had driven up, while Diana was frantically searching the neighborhood, and finding no response to his repeated rings at the door, had finally driven off, later returning just as the frightened nurse and the dog appeared from their fruitless investigation. After a hasty consultation, Diana called Service again to explain the further confusion, and he immediately gave his man orders to return at once for him personally.

When Mrs. Goodwin entered the house at five-thirty, to her surprise she found Service pacing the floor in her little living-room. Carefully explaining the situation, his efforts already in getting the police at work in all directions, he tenderly gave her as much comfort as he dared.

In the meantime at a distant ranch house in a very secluded spot in the mountains, little Billy had arrived in company with his captor. When released and his head uncovered, he found himself face to face with the man whom he had glimpsed through the window that night at the bungalow when Service first called. Ferret, Cabot's accomplice, shoved the boy roughly into a cold, bare room, dimly lighted. In a corner stood a little cot and on a small wooden table near by was a pitcher of milk and some bread in a bowl.

Wearily, with tear-stained face, yet trying to keep a stiff upper lip, the boy wandered over

to the table, ate a little and finding it tasted pretty good, he finally finished everything in sight, then almost toppled over onto the bed. He began to take off his clothes with difficulty as he was stiff from the long-restrained position in the car. Stretching out his arms with a prolonged yawn, he said aloud as if talking to his usual playmate, "Pal," "Well, I guess I'm like Aladdin when he found himself in the underground dungeon. Now I must look for the lamp and all will be well. Maybe my 'Arab' will come and take me home to Mother." Then as he got his outer clothing off, he evidently realized the lack of the usual pajamas and decided to crawl into bed in his underwear. He reached up to turn off the excuse for a light, standing on the only chair, and as he blinkingly looked at the bulb, he said again, with a sudden remembrance of his loved "Pal," "I tell you, I'll get my inside magnet to work. That will be better than Aladdin's lamp."

* * * * *

In his own cozy little bungalow home, his beloved "Arab" was at this same time reluctantly bidding good-night to the little mother, with the dog looking anxiously up at him as if he would surely solve the strange problem of his young master's absence. "I'll keep in touch with you tomorrow, and feel confident of a speedy solution of this affair. The motive can't be a reward, if the captor knows any-

thing of your business situation ; there is something personal behind it." Taking both of her hands in his, he looked tenderly down at the troubled face. "You do indeed need a protector now more than ever." The comfort of his presence and the assuring words suddenly released her pent-up nerves, and she did not resist the arms which enfolded her.

"When we get our little boy back again, wouldn't it be better to move your whole household, including faithful Diana, over to my big, lonely home? I've been planning extended wings at the rear to correspond with those in front; this would give you your own independent quarters, as well as sharing mine, and provide a playground equipped for the boy's especial interests."

Restored by his magnetic presence and the prospect of a real home with congenial companionship ahead, Joy almost forgot the immediate problem, and radiantly responded as he drew this picture of a cherished future for all of them.

He turned toward the door, and in passing her desk, she picked up a little framed copy of her favorite Burroughs' poem, and pointed to the two lines, so deeply imbedded in her mind—

"Nor time, nor space, nor deep nor high
Can keep my own away from me."

“That is the simple ‘magnet’ philosophy I have been able to show Billy through his little horseshoe plaything, and I know he will remember it, just as I am, wherever he is. Now it has proved true in bringing you into my life just when I most needed protection and love.”

“We’ll see it brought into even greater fulfillment than you can yet realize and yours will be a life of ‘Joy’ indeed, as far as I can make it.” With this, Service forced himself to leave her, with a goodnight caress.

* * * * *

Three days passed with every clue for the missing boy proving a disappointment. On the fourth day, as Joy sat at her desk in the office, vainly trying to concentrate her attention on some letters, Cabot suddenly entered, apparently in great agitation.

“Put on your wraps at once, Mrs. Goodwin. I have at last found, through my colored chauffeur, a ‘tip’ that will bring your boy in a few hours without any question. But we must leave at once—it is imperative.”

Joy rose hastily, as if to get her wraps from a closet, then stopped and looked at him intently. “You must drive around to my house and let me get Diana; she is quite necessary—both for me and the boy.” Cabot evidently started to object, then thought better of it. With a half-contemptuous smile, he held the

door open, and they descended the elevator to find Cabot's car waiting.

Just as Mrs. Goodwin started to get into the machine, she turned instinctively in time to see George, the negro porter, looking after her with a really frightened expression, then dash back into the entrance of the building to a telephone booth. With a feeling of wonderment, and a growing uneasiness which she always felt when alone with Cabot, she sat down reluctantly, then leaned forward to give the chauffeur the number of her house.

Diana, at this moment, hastily answered a summons to the telephone and George, at the other end, shouted, "Git your hat and catch de fust car to dis office. Yo' missus just went off in her boss's car and I'se sure dey's sumpin' wrong. I'll call Mistah Suvic—" Bang—he slammed the receiver, as, looking out through the glass door, he saw to his surprise, the very man he wanted—Mr. Service—evidently bound for the office upstairs to report to Mrs. Goodwin, with whom he had kept in close touch since the boy's disappearance.

At the porter's hasty explanation, Service was taken completely by surprise, and with a hurried direction to him, Service jumped into his car, telling his man to catch the trail of Cabot's machine, if possible, surmising that it must be headed for Mrs. Goodwin's bungalow.

In a half hour Diana was hurriedly making

her way from the street car toward the Equity Building. In spite of her hasty summons, she had taken pains to don her "best," and a certain feminine instinct led her to pass the shoe-shining stand where her admirer, Lem, did a thriving business. This aggressive "gen'man" happened at the moment to be "cooling his heels," and at sight of the proud, comely figure of Diana, head in the air and looking straight ahead as if totally unconscious of his proximity, he made a dash after her down the block.

"Hi, there—Oh, you gal o' mine," he called out.

"Niggah, who's you 'dressin' in such a mannah?" she replied, without a turn of the head, and proceeded on her way.

"I'se got a present fo' you—de fattest chicken in de market. Wait till I git it—."

Diana visibly weakened, slowing her pace, and Lem ran back to his stand, soon appearing with a parcel under his arm, just as she came to the Equity Building.

George, who had been on the lookout in the lobby, came forward in a good deal of excitement, and at that instant caught sight of Lem trying to catch up.

"Here's yo' chicken, honey-gal," Lem called.

At that, George, whose disposition had already been stretched beyond its usual good humor, due to his genuine alarm over Mrs.

Goodwin, seeing the chicken's legs dangling from the package, made a rush towards Lem.

"I'll teach yo black niggah to 'chicken' my gal," he shouted and made a grab for the innocent cause of the conflict, pulling it out from the smaller man's arms and chasing him half way down the block. When he returned, he rather shame-facedly handed the package over to Diana, who was nothing loath to accept an almost unknown luxury in Mrs. Goodwin's household.

In the meantime as Cabot's car stopped in front of Mrs. Goodwin's bungalow, Joy leaned forward impatiently. Hardly waiting for the machine to stop, she ran hastily to the front door, shutting it after her immediately as if she feared that Cabot would follow.

It took but a moment to look over the house and to her dismay there was no sign of Diana. A glance into the latter's closet showed that her wraps were gone, neither was the dog to be found. Such a situation in her household was most unusual, for when necessity took Diana out, it had been customary, during her absence, to leave "Pal" in charge, as he had proved himself absolutely reliable in watching both the house and his small master while at play.

Sensing something wrong, Joy went to the telephone to call Service only to learn that he

was not at home. There seemed nothing to do but return to the car, for in spite of her instinctive distrust of Cabot, she felt somehow that he could do what he had said with such assurance—bring her to Billy.

Just as the car started to glide away, a sharp, familiar barking attracted Joy's attention, and looking out, she saw "Pal" dashing around the corner from the direction of the street car, where he had followed Diana, who, in her excitement, had forgotten to shut him inside. Joy implored Cabot to stop for the dog, but he curtly refused, and she sank back in her seat, for the first time feeling a sense of inner defeat in his presence, and a growing fear.

The dog, however, having caught a glimpse of his mistress, persisted in following the car. After seeing Diana leave on the street car, and now his mistress rushing away, he evidently felt that his whole little world was slipping away from him, so he followed as closely as possible, even after the speed of the machine increased on the country roads.

Just as Cabot's car turned a corner, two blocks down from the little bungalow, Service's machine drew up at the curb in front of the house. Recognizing the dog in pursuit of the disappearing automobile Service grasped the probable situation and told his chauffeur to drive on slowly, allowing the first car to gain on him.

Mile after mile the pursuit continued until finally the dog began to show signs of not being able to keep up, and as he was now lagging considerably behind, Service told his man to catch up to the animal, then slow down carefully to pick him up. At first suspicious, the tired dog began to growl, then recognizing Service, finally yielded to his persuasions and climbed in, almost falling from exhaustion. By this time the car ahead was nearly out of sight, but speeding up, they again caught the trail which was now approaching the foothills.

In the first car, Cabot, growing more aggressively offensive as they reached the country roads, attempted to embrace Mrs. Goodwin, and held her fast, saying triumphantly, though in subdued tones, "Now you are my possession and you will soon be in the remote cottage where your boy is waiting for you—and me." The discreet chauffeur, evidently well primed as to what to expect, was apparently unaware of any occurrence in the rear seat. Joy realized that he would remain stolidly indifferent to any outcry, should she care to appeal to him, so as Cabot continued speaking in her ear, she decided that it was best, for the time being at any rate, not to resist.

"If you willingly accept the plans I have made for our future, I will take you and the boy at once to a friend's home in a nearby town and we will be properly married to

satisfy your scruples. If not—his captivity and yours will be lengthened and strengthened in an even more remote spot, and I shall visit you when I so desire. You are mine either way. I can give you more than your infatuated lover who has been ‘playing up’ to the boy to ingratiate himself with you.”

Struggling for several minutes to release herself from his hold, hearing his plans as if in a dream of horror, she suddenly realized that she need not give in to such a ruthless situation if she were true to her instincts and to her conviction of the power of Good in her life. “Resist not evil” flashed into her mind, and she lay back passively, as if accepting his embrace. Knowing full well the magnetic power of real Love, as she had taught it to her little son through his plaything, the horseshoe, she consciously turned her attention to the true devotion and protection she knew was with her every moment in the love of Service for her and her child.

Gradually a look of peace came over her face as she relaxed from the strain and fear of the last hour in Cabot’s power. He, himself, blind to such knowledge as hers, and thinking only of his own passion, thought she had surrendered easily to him and an expression of conscious power and triumph gleamed in his eyes as he held her fast.

The car was now climbing up a canyon road

not far from its destination. Suddenly the machine gave a jerk; it lunged to the side of the road. In attempting to meet the emergency, the chauffeur lost control, and the car began quickly backing down the hill. At a turn in the road it careened into a deep ditch and was finally stopped by a huge tree.

Not many moments later, Service's car carefully turned the curve and came to an abrupt stop as the chauffeur caught sight of a part of the overturned machine with a negro head just emerging with difficulty from the front opening. Service and his man leaped out and ran quickly to assist in extricating the other occupants, as the injured chauffeur, his face cut from the broken glass, was practically useless.

Both Cabot and Mrs. Goodwin appeared to have been knocked unconscious and the extent of any other possible injury was as yet to be determined, although Cabot's groans, as he was eventually released, indicated some broken bones at least. Joy gave no sign as Service and his man carried her to the car. The dog barked excitedly as he recognized his mistress and tried to lick her face when she was stretched out on the wide seat in the rear.

In the little ranch house two miles beyond the scene of the accident, little Billy, serenely unconscious of the near-tragedy down the road, had been trying to amuse himself just as he had been doing for the last two days



under the constant surveillance of Cabot's surly ranch man and his hardened looking wife. He had found some pets in a friendly cat and her kittens, and when allowed the privilege of these little animals, he was fairly content.

Unused, however, to harsh treatment, the boy had quailed under the rough blows directed toward him the first day when he anxiously and plaintively put some questions to his warders. "Is this Africa?" he had asked on the morning following his arrival, when he encountered the hard-faced man who had been Cabot's agent in arranging to keep the captured boy.

"What ya givin' us? Africa!—," with a sneer. "You ain't quite there, I reckon."

"Well, in my Aladdin story, the princess was carried off in the night to Africa by a wicked man—." A slap over the head silenced this outburst and from that time on, Billy's imagination worked along silently. With his child-like faith he never doubted that his release would come just as Aladdin arrived in the "nick of time" to rescue his princess from the African conjuror.

As the boy sat playing with the kittens in a fenced inclosure at the rear of the ranch house, his attention was suddenly arrested by the sound of a heavy machine making the grade in front of the place. So little passing



occurred in this remote spot that he stopped his play to listen, especially as it was soon evident that the car had stopped. Ever on the alert for release from his imprisonment, Billy was not wholly surprised a few minutes later to see his friend, Service, coming toward him from the entrance at the rear of the house. With a joyous cry he ran forward to greet his deliverer, whose sober face relaxed somewhat with the relief of finding the child. At his heels was "Pal," scattering dismay among the boy's new pets, but too much excited over his restored young master to give any heed to the feline balls running in all directions while the growling, spitting mother-cat tried to back them toward a retreat under the house.

"Is Mother here?" asked the boy eagerly, and then grew silent as Service explained that she had been taken ill on the road and would have to be undisturbed for perhaps a long time. Service kept the boy occupied until the men had carried the two injured people into the house, then made preparations to have his man return at once to the nearest town to secure a doctor, while he stood guard over Joy, hoping for an awakening from unconsciousness before the physician's arrival.

Back in the little bungalow in the city, Diana had been sitting, Bible in hand, for some time following her ill-timed trip to town where, following the "chicken" episode, she had been

unable to learn much of what had happened from the excited account of her friend, George, at the Equity Building.

Though wholly mystified by the turn events had taken, and inclined to be panicky after the nature of her race, the good woman had imbibed enough of the mental atmosphere in Mrs. Goodwin's home so that even with the disappearance of her entire household, including the dog, she held fast to her faith that soon some word would come in explanation. Presently she jumped up as the telephone rang, and after listening breathlessly for a moment, she called back, "Praise de Lawd, Mistah Suvic. I'll hold de fort 'til you all lets me know when yo're comin', but I hope it won't be mo' than a day or two."

Sinking back into her rocker, she waved her hands excitedly for a moment or so, then added aloud, "Here's where that man George can do a turn fo' me and keep me company after his chores is done at de office tomorrow. I'll cook dat chicken in Alabamy style, and maybe—," she laughed aloud, "Well, I reckon I has been a bit cool-like when he wanted to come 'round."

* * * * *

The third day following, Mrs. Goodwin was sufficiently restored from what proved only bruises and shock to be removed to her home with Billy. Cabot was still in bed, fiercely

raging over a broken leg, together with the utter collapse of what he had thought were well-laid plans which could not miscarry. Destined to stay in his self-imposed prison until the doctor gave permission for him to be removed to his bachelor quarters in town, he chafed constantly, thus retarding his recovery, and was ready to burst the bonds when he heard Service's car leaving on that day for its destination in the city, knowing full well who the passengers must be.

* * * * *

Three months later saw the fulfillment of Service's long-cherished plan of adding two additional wings at the more secluded side of his unique home, this part to serve his new bride for her own quarters. Here she could now fulfill a dream of independence with an opportunity to carry out her special hobbies, and give her boy, in addition, the advantages for which she had longed toward his physical and mental development.

Diana had been established in her own apartment and it looked as if another addition to the colored ménage might soon be made in the person of George, who seemed quite willing to resign his place at the Equity Building to meet the additional demands for help at the "Center," especially as his faithful courtship of Diana showed definite signs of being rewarded.

A week after the family was well settled, preparations were made for the first public opening of the building since it had been temporarily closed during the reconstruction work.

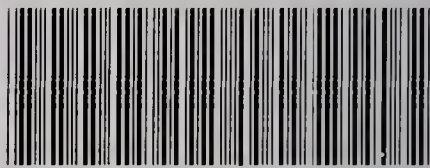
As two o'clock approached on the afternoon of this opening day, Billy was standing out in the patio, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the hundred little guests who had been especially invited for the occasion from a Children's Home in the city. As these happy youngsters, with their teachers, trooped into the auditorium where a special performance of "Arabian Nights," in picture form, was to be given, Billy played the part of a very joyous little host. Following the play, Mrs. Goodwin and Diana dispensed good things to eat on the roof garden, so the children evidently felt as they took their departure, that they had indeed been to a veritable fairy palace.

After the last bus had driven away, Billy, with his mother and new father, turned to walk back through the patio just as stately "Leo" and frisky "Pal," who had become fast friends, came from the porch at the rear. Billy stood still by the fountain a moment, then put his hand into his pocket, pulling out his old treasure—the horseshoe magnet. He held it aloft while his two playmates came up to him, eagerly lifting their heads as if expecting a morsel.

Laughing happily, the little boy turned around, and ran impulsively to his mother, throwing his arms around her. Then he left her to catch hold of Service's hands, the latter lifting him high up on his shoulders. With an arm around his "Arab's" neck, Billy reached out to encircle his mother's as well. They stood there a moment, a symbolic group, united through the invisible current of Love, surrounded by every evidence of beauty, and the happy companionship of animals and birds, ready to continue their far-reaching service to a larger world beyond the confines of their own happy home.



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